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# CHAPTER 5

## SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF PEACE

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Chapter 5, *Speaking the Language of Peace*, deals with developing effective communication skills in order to carry out positive interactions in every day social situations as well as in conflict situations. For a foreign language learner, communicative competence involves knowing the rules of social behavior as well as the rules of language. In this chapter, students will explore the language needed for pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, collaboration, affirming others, and expressing feelings clearly in ways that do not accuse others - in other words, the language of peace. The activities presented in this chapter are meant to give students practice in speaking and listening attentively in an atmosphere of caring and encouragement. Teachers can use the proposed lesson by itself or expand it by adding additional activities in related lessons. The [Internet Resources](#) in this chapter provide many ideas for additional lessons that will help students to develop their awareness of behaviors that foster peace and practice language skills that promote positive social interactions.



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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Learning and practicing communication skills within the framework of peace education means establishing a positive classroom atmosphere in which students work together in cooperative ways. Educators who believe that a peaceable classroom is an opportune place to instill attitudes, values, and knowledge that promote peace and non-violence have identified experiences such as cooperative learning, conflict resolution, structured controversy, and school mediation as the core of any comprehensive effort to create a peaceful school environment. Kriedler (1984) has developed a self-assessment exercise for teachers about responses to classroom conflicts. This exercise helps teachers to look at their own peacekeeping strategies in the classroom and identify ways that they can expand their repertoire. As teachers model the skills and the attitudes that promote a peaceable learning community, their students' attitudes and values are positively enriched and shaped.

In addition to the powerful effect of modeling peaceful behaviors in the classroom, explicit teaching of positive communication skills helps learners to focus directly on pro-social attitudes and behaviors and the language that accompanies them. Barbara Birch (1993) calls for teaching pro-social communicative competence in the ESOL classroom and defines such competence to include schemata building through setting up appropriate situations and activities in the classroom. For example, a "rescue" schema for pro-social competence includes being aware of others' needs, knowing what kind of help to offer, and having expectations about what results will be. Other pro-social schemas are awareness of a limited or lacking resource, willingness to share or donate that resource, and an understanding of the consequences of the sharing or donation. Birch includes cooperation, tolerance, acting fairly, and resolving conflicts creatively as topics for classroom instruction. Pro-social knowledge structures can be developed in the classroom through reading literature or watching movies with pro-social messages. Follow-up activities, which include analysis and personal reflection on the pro-social themes, give students opportunities to practice pro-social behaviors and language in a safe and structured setting. Discussions of stories and movies can lead to role play, drama activities, dialogue construction, and personal writing, which give learners experiences in practicing pro-social behaviors. The goal of this instruction is to establish behaviors and language in the classroom that will become an intrinsic part of the learners' attitudes and values after they leave the classroom.

The following list is a selection of the most common pro-social behaviors and communication skills that have been identified by peace educators for classroom instruction and practice. The first two entries are themes in previous chapters of the Peace Education volume.

- [Speaking for a purpose](#) We understand that the perceptions of others may be different from our own and that what is said should serve a mutual productive purpose, such as clarification of the situation. Conflict resolution skills are important for clarifying situations.

- [Listening attentively and reflectively](#). Listening to others in order to understand the whole message (the emotions, perceptions, and context as well as what was said) is an important stage in effective communication. Reflection of the whole message back to the speaker communicates that he or she has been understood.
- [Promoting self-esteem, dignity for oneself, and respect for the feelings and rights of others](#). Use the language of acknowledging, labeling, and affirming pro-social behavior (e.g., generosity, being considerate, helpfulness) in the classroom in your interactions with students. Also, encourage students to use pro-social behaviors in the classroom. A basic starting point is to provide language activities that show students the functions of thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and other pro-social norms of behavior. This can be done through dialogues, role-plays, modeling, and other activities.
- [Speaking about yourself instead of about the other person](#). It is more effective to describe an issue in terms of its impact on you rather than in terms of what the other side did or why you think they did it. Practice the use of "I" statements instead of "you" statements to clarify facts and feelings in practice situations, skits, and dialogues.
- [Speaking with positive emotional expression](#). Sometimes when we are angry or highly involved in discussing an issue, we say things that do not promote effective communication. Speaking clearly and firmly so that the other person understands - but without negative emotion - involves making statements without blaming, name-calling, raising one's voice, or demanding. It means avoiding "put-downs" and the use of "loaded" negative language. We can help students to be more aware of negative emotional language and its effects on communication by analyzing scripts for instances of its use. Discussing alternative language that would clarify and improve the understanding of the listener will help learners to be more sensitive in choosing what they say and how they say it. After analyzing and discussing the scripts, students can write and act out both positive and negative versions of dialogues that contain emotional expressions, paying attention to the non-verbal as well as verbal expressions they choose to use.
- [Understanding possible barriers to effective communication and how to diffuse them](#). Possible barriers to communication are the behaviors of interrupting, dominating the discussion, criticizing, judging, teasing, and using emotional language. Learners need to be able to analyze the discourse of conversations in order to identify these communication "pitfalls". Further instruction on alternate behaviors for similar situations will help learners to communicate more effectively.

The activities in the lesson for Chapter 5 are based on the above list of pro-social behaviors and communicative language skills.

## CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

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The activities in Chapter 5 focus on developing the learners' awareness of pro-social behaviors and the language that accompanies these behaviors in a variety of situations. Learners will practice the communication skills of speaking and listening with the goal of promoting positive social interaction. Teachers are encouraged to adapt this 50-minute lesson to meet the language and social interaction needs of their students. The activities can easily be adjusted for different levels of language proficiency and for topics that are more appropriate or more interesting for your students.



## PRELIMINARY LESSON PLANNING

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### Materials:

In the Warm-up Activity you will create a word-web of positive social acts with your students on the chalkboard. Transfer the word-web to large paper and keep it in the classroom as a [Pro-social Behaviors Chart](#) for students to use in Activities # 1 and # 2. In Activity # 1 you will use the *Pro-social Behaviors Chart* and you will create a table to record information about the (1) social event, (2) key behavior, and (3) acknowledging statement generated by the activity. A list of *Word Partners* - key words for social behaviors and words with similar or contrasting meaning - is found in [Appendix A](#) for use in Activity # 2. For more practice in using new words, the *Word Form Chart* for Activities # 1 and #2 is found in [Appendix B](#). [Appendix C](#) provides situations for practicing "I" and "you" statements in Activity #2, and [Appendix D](#) provides a transcript of a conversation to be used for analyzing negative emotional language in Activity # 3.

## WARM UP ACTIVITY

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(approximately 10 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To create an effective classroom atmosphere for the study of pro-social behaviors
- To establish a schema for affirming others

*Procedure:*

1. Ask students to suggest several social behaviors that show good will among classmates and promote a friendly classroom atmosphere. Put the suggestions on the chalkboard with an empty circle in the middle (i.e., the "web" without the key word). In addition to the students' suggestions, use questions in order to elicit the following words and phrases if the students do not volunteer them: sharing, welcoming, being polite, being considerate, cooperation, apologizing, helpfulness, kindness, generosity. Give examples to illustrate the meaning of any terms that are new to the students.
2. Put the term "pro-social behaviors" in the center of the web. Explain to the students that the listed behaviors are positive social behaviors that improve all interactions, not just those of the classroom community. Ask students to volunteer other groups whose interactions would be enhanced by pro-social behaviors. Examples might be: families, sports teams, school clubs and committees, business meetings, etc.

### Transition Activity

Tell students that the rest of the class will be devoted to exploring ways to use language positively for better social interactions.



## ACTIVITY #1

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(Approximately 10 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To expand the learners' vocabulary for the topic of pro-social behaviors
- To practice language of acknowledgment for pro-social behaviors

*Materials needed:*

- The *Pro-social Behaviors Chart*, which was created in the [Warm-up Activity](#)
- A table for recording acknowledgments for pro-social behaviors
- A list of *Word Partners* in [Appendix A](#)
- The *Word Form Chart* in [Appendix B](#)

*Procedure:*

1. Refer to the *Pro-social Behaviors Chart*. Ask students to offer statements or phrases that could be used to acknowledge someone when they have shown a pro-social behavior. Put a table on the chalkboard to record the information. Model the first acknowledgment yourself. Give students a brief "event", ask students to label the event as one of the pro-social behaviors on the Chart, and then offer an acknowledgment that uses the word or phrase from the chart. An example might be:

### Pro-Social Behaviors Chart

Event	Pro-social Behavior	Acknowledgment
Lisa has offered to bring a snack to the after-school book club discussion.	Generosity	Lisa, that is very generous of you! We're always really hungry at the end of a busy day.
Margarite, whose family lives in the area, has invited Tomas and Lu Xiu to Thanksgiving dinner at her house.	Kindness	What a kind thing to do, Margarite. I'm sure your friends will enjoy learning about a North American family tradition.

Fill in the chart for the pro-social behaviors that were suggested for the web in the Warm-up Activity. Encourage students to use a variety of word forms for the Acknowledgments.

Refer students to the list of *Word Partners* in [Appendix A](#).

2. Ask students to transfer the new terms to a *Word Form Chart* and to use a dictionary to fill-out all appropriate forms. See [Appendix B](#) for a sample *Word Form Chart* for key words related to pro-social behaviors.



### Transition Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To give students vocabulary of "negative emotions" that will be used in [Activity #2](#)

*Procedure:*

- Tell students that using language effectively is especially important in situations in which a conflict or disagreement has arisen and emotions are exposed.
- Ask students to brainstorm some words that express "negative" emotions. Go back to the *Pro-social Behaviors Chart* [Warm-up Activity] used in the Warm up Activity and for each entry of a pro-social behavior, enter a negative term. Brainstorm other negative emotional language. Put this vocabulary on the chalkboard for reference in Activity # 2. Examples of words for "negative emotions" are: angry, hurt, embarrassed, sad, frustrated, unhappy, offended, resentful, etc.. Ask students to use their dictionaries or lexicons to add words to the list.



## ACTIVITY #2 (APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES)

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### Purpose:

- To explore the concept of "I" statements versus "you" statements for expressing emotions [See [background](#)]
- To prepare students with appropriate language for expressing emotions positively

### Materials needed:

- The list of words describing "negative emotions" from the Transition Activity
- The list of *Word Partners* from [Appendix A](#)

### Procedures:

1. Tell the student that in a situation in which people are hurt or angry there is a tendency to use language that blames or accuses the other person - "you" language. This type of language usually is not effective in working out a problem or smoothing angry feelings because it makes the other party feel defensive. A better approach is to state your feelings using "I" statements, clarifying the impact of the situation on how you are affected and how you feel.
2. Give the students a situation and ask them to describe the difference in the impact of two related statements which you put on the chalkboard.

**Situation:** Cindy and Ellen are friends who often do things together. They made a date to meet at the Mall to go shopping at 2:30. It is now 3:00 and Cindy is waiting for Ellen. When Ellen arrives, Cindy says:

(Put on the chalk board)

*You're late again! I can't believe you are so inconsiderate!*

*I know you're busy, but I get upset when you make me wait for half an hour!*

Briefly discuss the students' reactions to the two statements.

Point out again that in an emotional situation, the use of "you" statements usually puts one of the parties on the defensive and escalates the problem. The use of the "I" statement often diffuses the situation and gives the person spoken to the opportunity to respond more objectively. Note the sentence frame for the "I" statement:

"I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_."

Ask students to suggest other similar frames for "I" statements (e.g., I'm \_\_\_\_\_ because you \_\_\_\_\_).

3. Ask the students to work in pairs to respond to the four situations in Appendix C by writing a "you" statement and an "I" statement for each situation. Ask students to join with another pair of students to compare and discuss the different responses to the situations. Vocabulary to express negative and positive emotions is found in Appendix A.
4. Ask students to work in pairs to choose a "negative emotion" and to write a situation about it. Ask each pair to write a "you" statement and an "I" statement for the situation. Then ask each pair to give the situation (but not their statements) to another pair, who will write "you" and "I" statements in response. Ask the two pairs to compare their situations and statements. Did both pairs use the same negative emotion words in the "I" statement? If not, what differences are there in the words?

5. Ask each pair to choose one of the situations to present to the class along with both the "you" and the "I" statements. Discuss with the class ways in which the situation might escalate or de-escalate according to each statement.

### Transition Activity (approximately 5 minutes)

Review with the class what the effect is of using "I" statements rather than "you" statements when we are angry or upset (e.g., to soften the negative emotions and to make the other party less defensive). Tell them that by choosing what we say and how we say it carefully, we can express our feelings more clearly and elicit a more receptive response. Tell them that negative emotional language such as put-downs, language of blaming, demanding, or ridiculing, or use of negatively "loaded" words rarely results in a receptive response and is to be avoided if our goal is effective communication.



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## ACTIVITY #3

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(approximately 10 minutes)

*Purpose:*

- To help students to identify instances of negative emotional language in prepared scripts of conversations
- To discuss ways to change the negative emotional language to positive emotional language [See [Background](#)]

*Materials needed:*

- [Appendix D](#): Script of a conversation that exemplifies negative emotional language such as put-downs, language of blaming, demanding, or ridiculing, or negatively "loaded" words, etc.

*Procedures:*

1. Ask students to read with you the Conversation from [Appendix D](#). Read this aloud yourself or have a prepared tape of two voices. Include appropriate intonation patterns, loudness of voice, etc. in the reading. Ask students to listen a second time and to underline any language that they think contains a negative emotion.
2. Put a chart on the chalkboard with the categories of negative language, for example, criticism, blaming, put-down, demands, "loaded" words. With the class, discuss the words and phrases that they have underlined and place them in the chart, pointing out the appropriate categories.
3. Discuss with the students how the language in the chart could be softened to promote a more positive effect. Make a parallel chart and record the suggestions of language that makes the points clearly but is more objective. For example, the statement "You're stupid!" would be recorded as an instance of "name-calling". An alternative statement might be the use of an "I" statement: "I feel really angry when you forget to pick me up. I had to take the bus and I missed my TV show." Note that the alternative softened language often is more specific in stating the exposed emotion than the negatively charged language.
4. Ask students to work in pairs or triads to create dialogues that have instances of negative emotional language. Then have them exchange their dialogues with another pair or triad. Ask the pairs or triads to revise the dialogue to provide more positive emotional language, while still retaining the message of the original dialogue.
5. Return the revised dialogues to the original group. Ask the groups to now write "stage directions" for both of the versions, indicating postures, gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc. Have one of the dialogues acted out in both of the versions. Discuss the impact that the non-verbal language has on the emotional level of the dialogue.



## COOL DOWN ACTIVITY

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**(Approximately 5 minutes)**

*Purpose:*

- To end the class on a positive note

*Procedure:*

1. Ask students to think of several actions or gestures or greetings might indicate positive feelings in a class and good will among classmates. Some suggestions might be :

Nod your head; Shake hands; Give a hug; Give a smile;

Say: You look great!; How are you?; Nice to see you! Can I help?

2. Tell the students that there is a "camp song" that captures this feeling of camaraderie that they will learn and sing: Put the prepared song on the board, a chart, or a transparency. (The letters of the musical notes are below the lyrics.)

If you're happy and you know it "CLAP YOUR HANDS" (All clap hands)

C C F F F F F F E F G

If you're happy and you know it "CLAP YOUR HANDS" (All clap hands)

C C G G G G G G F G A

If you're happy and you know it then your life will surely show it

F F B B B B D D B B A G A G F F

If you're happy and you know it, "CLAP YOUR HANDS". (All clap hands)

A A G G G F E E D E F

Repeat the song, changing the action phrase to "nod your head", give a hug, etc.

3. Sing the song "If You're Happy" with the class. Ask students to stand in a circle as they sing, and give one student a ball. At the end of the refrain, the student with the ball will throw it to another student, who will then provide the action words for the next verse.



## EXTENSIONS

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1. Expansion for Activity #2, "you" and "I" statements. Ask students to each make up another situation that could provoke negative emotions (e.g., a situation that makes someone angry, frustrated, hurt, etc.), similar to those given in [Appendix C](#). Ask students to hand in the situations and copy them on small 3" x 5" cards, editing as necessary. These cards will then be used in a game. Students choose a partner and select a game card with the negative situation. They then make up two short dialogues using first "you" statements and then "I" statements, being careful to add notes as to facial expressions and gestures to accompany the dialogue. Pairs can then volunteer to present the dialogues to the class. After the presentation, the class can discuss the dialogues and offer alternatives to the dialogues.
2. Concentration Card Game. From the Word Partners in [Appendix A](#), make a game of "Concentration". Copy contrasting word pairs (e.g., kind-cruel) on separate cards. Make ten pairs for each game. The game is played by having the cards shuffled and placed face down on a table. The first player turns over one card, then a second card, looking for a match. If a match is found and identified by the player, the player gets the pair of cards and accumulates two points. The player then takes another turn. If a match is not made, the turn goes to the next player. The object of the game is to be attentive to where the cards are so that you can make a match on your turn.
3. Conversation Bloopers. [See [Background](#)] An extension of Activity #3, the purpose of this activity is to heighten sensitivity to barriers to effective communication. Ask students to work in groups of three. Give each group a prepared conversation of ten to fifteen lines about a familiar topic in which the language is neutral. (Texts with conversations are a good source for such neutral dialogues. The teacher can also create conversations based on class reading topics or unit themes that are being studied.) The object of the activity is for the group to rewrite the conversation, adding conversation "bloopers", such as interruptions, criticism, negative remarks with loaded words, teasing, etc. The group then presents the revised dialogue to the class several times, with one of the students taking the role of the ineffective communicator.
  - The students present the dialogue to the class once.
  - They present it again, and the class identifies the Bloopers by calling out "blooper" when one occurs. At the end of the second presentation, the presenting team tells the class if all bloopers have been identified.
  - A follow-up presentation of the dialogue then shows how the two effective communicators can reply to the Blooper without using negative language. Phrases such as, "That may well be, John, but we should also *consider, understand, be aware that, etc.*" are useful here.





Word Partners for Pro-social Behaviors		
Key words for the pro-social behaviors that were introduced in the Warm-Up Activity are listed in the left-hand column. Use your dictionary or thesaurus to add words that are similar in meaning in the right hand column. The first three have been done as examples. Choose some of the words to add to the Word Form Chart in Appendix B. Add new key words as they come up in class discussion.		
Words with Contrasting Meaning	Key Word	Words with Similar Meaning
Unapologetic	apologize (verb)	say you are sorry; acknowledge a mistake
Inconsiderate; thoughtless, unkind	considerate (adj)	thoughtful; kind;
(be) uncooperative; oppose; (be) at cross purposes	cooperate (v)	work together; participate; join in
	generosity (n)	
	helpful (adj)	
	kind (adj)	
	polite (adj)	
	sharing (adj)	
	welcoming (adj.)	

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### Word Form Chart for Pro-social Behaviors

Complete the following chart with the appropriate word forms for the given words. Use your dictionary to find the word forms. Add additional words and their various forms from the list of Word Partners in Appendix A and from classroom discussions.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
kindness			
	(to be) generous		
			politely
		welcoming	
	cooperate		
		apologetic	
			considerately
	share		
helpfulness			

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**Situations for "You" and "I" Statements**

Read the following situations and write an "I" statement and a "you" statement for each situation. Use the guidelines discussed in Activity 3.

**Situation A:** Jill and Donna are working on a project together. Jill was supposed to bring in newspaper clippings for them to work on together. Jill forgot, and now the project will have to be handed in late, resulting in a lower grade for both of them. Donna says:

**Situation B:** Dan and Gene are roommates. Dan often comes home late from parties and makes a lot of noise, waking Gene from his sleep. This has happened again, and Gene says:

**Situation C:** Franco and Chang are classmates, and they sometimes eat lunch together in the cafeteria. Franco has the habit of forgetting his meal ticket, and Chang has repeatedly given him a meal from his own meal ticket. Lately, Chang is beginning to wonder if Franco forgets or if he just wants a free lunch. At the next incident Chang says:

**Situation D:** Bob and Howie work together in after-school jobs in a supermarket. At work Bob is friendly with Howie, and they joke around and take their breaks together. However, when they are in school, Howie notices that Bob never talks to him or invites him to each lunch in the cafeteria. Today Bob was eating with a group of his friends when Howie came to the table; everyone left the table as soon as Howie sat down. After work Howie says to Bob:

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## APPENDIX D

### Conversation script

**Situation:** *Tricia and Roberto are co-workers on the college newspaper. Tricia is responsible for choosing and editing the stories that will be included in each edition, and Roberto is a reporter. Roberto thinks that Tricia is not treating him or the paper fairly because some of his articles, which often deal with sports issues, are cut entirely and others are shortened and edited substantially. Roberto decides to make a point of this with Tricia.*

**Roberto:** So, Tricia, are we going to have another "College Social Life" issue this week?

**Tricia:** What are you talking about? I suppose you want to have your own column - "Ask a Jock", or maybe "Who Wins What".

**Roberto:** That's a really bigoted thing to say.....at least people are interested in my stories. The last three issues of this paper read like a poor imitation of "People" magazine.

**Tricia:** Don't be such a baby. If you're going to be a journalist, you have to grow up and stop whining when your story is scrapped.

**Roberto:** Right. Your society sheet is why we have been losing readers all semester. This is a college campus, Tricia. How many people did you see at the poetry reading last night compared to the basketball game? People play sports, watch sports, and they want to read about sports.

**Tricia:** And you are the campus "bad sport", Roberto. Your stories always have a macho slant.

**Roberto:** You know, Tricia, not everybody thinks you are the last word in journalistic criticism. If you weren't Dr. Anders' pet, you wouldn't be the editor of this paper.

**Tricia:** Get lost, Roberto. And cover something besides a basketball game if you want your stories in print.

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